# Making light of CHRIST AND SALVATION Too oft the Issue of Gospel-Invitations.

Manifested in a SERMON preached at *Laurence Iury* in *London*.

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BIBL

Heb. 2. 34. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*

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# *To the Reader.*

*Reader.*

BEing called on in *London* to Preach, when I had no time to ſtudy, I was fain to preach ſome Sermons that I had preached in the Country a little before. This was one, which I preached at *S. Laurence*, in the Church where my Reverend and faithful Brother in Chriſt, Mr. *Richard Vines* is Paſtor: when I came home, I was followed by ſuch importunities by Letters

to Print the Sermon, that I have yielded thereunto; though I know not fully the ground of their desires. Seeing it must abroad, will the Lord but bless it to the cure of thy contempt of Christ and Grace, how comfortable may the occasion prove to thee and me! It is the sleighting of Christ and Salvation, that undoes the world. Oh happy man if thou scape but this sin! Thousands do split their souls on this Rock which they should build them on. Look into the world, among rich and poor, high and low, young and old, and see whether it appear not by the whole scope of their Con-

Converſations, that they ſet more by ſomething elſe then Chriſt: and for all the proclamations of his Grace in the Goſpel, and our common profeſſing our ſelves to be his Diſciples, and to Believe the Glorious things that he hath promiſed us in another world, whether it yet appear not by the deceitfulneſs of our ſervice, by our heartleſs endeavours to obtain his Kingdom, and by our buſie and delightful following of the world, that the moſt who are called Chriſtians, do yet in their hearts make light of Chriſt? And if ſo, what wonder if they periſh by their contempt! Wilt

thou but ſoberly peruſe this ſhort Diſcourſe, and conſider well as thou readeſt, of its truth and weight, till thy heart be ſenſible what a ſin it is to make light of Chriſt and thy own ſalvation, and till the Lord that bought thee be advanced in the eſtimation and affections of thy ſoul, thou ſhalt hereby rejoyce, and fulfill the deſires of

Thy ſervant in the faith,

*Rich. Baxter.*

Mat. 22.5. *But they made light of it.*

THE bleſſed ſon of God, that thought it not enough to die for the world, but would himſelf alſo be the Preacher of Grace and Salvation, doth comprize in this Parable the ſumme of his Goſpel. By the King that is here ſaid to make the marriage, is meant God the Father that ſent his Son into the world to cleanſe them from their ſins, and eſpouſe them to himſelf. By his Son for whom the Marriage is made, is meant the Lord Jeſus Chriſt the eternal Son of God, who took to his God-head the nature of man, that he might be capable of being their Redeemer when they had loſt themſelves in ſin. By the Marriage is meant The Conjunction of Chriſt to the ſoul of ſinners, when he giveth up himſelf to them to be their Saviour, and they give up them-

ſelves to him as his Redeemed ones, to be ſaved and ruled by him; the perfection of which Marriage will be at the day of Judgement, when the Conjunction between the whole Church and Chriſt ſhall be ſolemnized. The word here tranſlated *Marriage*, rather ſignifieth the *Marriage-Feaſt*; and the meaning is, that the world is invited by the Goſpel to come in and partake of Chriſt and Salvation, which comprehendeth both Pardon, Juſtification and Right to Salvation, and all other Priviledges of the Members of Chriſt. The *Invitation* is Gods offer of Chriſt and Salvation in the Goſpel; the ſervants that Invite them, are the Preachers of the Goſpel, who are ſent forth by God to that end; the preparation for the Feaſt there mentioned, is, The Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, and the enacting of a Law of Grace, and opening a way for revolting ſinners to return to God. There is a mention of ſending ſecond Meſſengers, becauſe God uſeth not to take the firſt denyal, but to exerciſe his patience till ſinners are Obſtinate. The firſt perſons invited are the Jews; upon their Obſtinate Refuſal they are ſentenced to puniſhment; and the Gentiles are invited, and not only invited, but by powerful Preaching, and Miracles, and Effectual Grace compelled,

led, that is, infallibly prevailed with to come in. The number of them is so great, that the house is filled with the Guests; Many come sincerely, not only looking at the pleasure of the Feast, that is, at the Pardon of sin, and Deliverance from the wrath of God, but also at the honour of the Marriage, that is of the Redeemer, and their profession by giving up themselves to an holy Conversation; But some come in only for the Feast, that is Justification by Christ, having not the wedding Garment of sound Resolution for Obedience in their life, and looking only at themselves in Believing, and not to the glory of their Redeemer; and these are sentenced to everlasting misery, and speed as ill as those that came not in at all; seeing a Faith that will not work, is but like that of the Devil; and they that look to be pardoned and saved by it, are mistaken, as *James* sheweth, 2.24.

The words of my Text contain a Narration of the ill entertainment that the Gospel findeth with many to whom it is sent, even after a first and second invitation, They make light of it, and are taken up with other things. Though it be the Jews that were first guilty, they have too many followers among us Gentiles to this day.

Doct.

Doct. *For all the wonderful love and mercy that God hath manifested in giving his Son to be the Redeemer of the world, and which the Son hath manifested in Redeeming them by his Blood; for all his full preparation by being a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of all; for all his Personal excellencies, and that full and glorious Salvation that he hath procured, and for all his free offers of these, and frequent and earnest Invitation of sinners: yet many do make light of all this, and prefer their worldly enjoyments before it. The ordinary entertainment of all is by contempt.*

Not that all do so, or that all continue to do so who were once guilty of it: for God hath his chosen whom he will compell to come in. But till the Spirit of grace overpower the dead and obstinate hearts of men, they hear the Gospel as a common story, and the great matters contained in it go not to the heart.

The Method in which I shall handle this Doctrine, is this.

1, I shall shew you what it is that men make light of.

2. What this sin of making light of it is.

3. The cause of the sin.

4. The use of the Doctrine.

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I. THE thing that carnal hearers make light of, is, 1. The Doctrine of the Goſpel it ſelf, which they hear regardleſsly. 2. The benefits offered them therein: which are, 1. Chriſt himſelf. 2. The benefits which he giveth.

Concerning Chriſt himſelf, the Goſpel 1. Declareth his perſon and nature, and the great things that he hath done and ſuffered for man: his Redeeming him from the wrath of God by his blood, and procuring a grant of ſalvation with himſelf. Furthermore, The ſame Goſpel maketh an offer of Chriſt to ſinners, that if they will accept him on his eaſie and reaſonable terms, he will be their Saviour, the Phyſian of their ſouls, their husband and their head.

2. The benefits that he offereth them, are theſe. 1. That with theſe Bleſſed Relations to him, himſelf and intereſt in him, they ſhall have the pardon of all their ſins paſt, and be ſaved from Gods wrath, and be ſet in a ſure way of obtaining a pardon for all the ſins that they ſhall commit hereafter, ſo they do but obey ſincerely, and turn not again to the rebellion of their unregeneracy. 2. They ſhall have the Spirit to become

come their Guide and Sanctifyer, and to dwell in their ſouls, and help them againſt their enemies, and conform them more and more to his Image, and heal their diſeaſes, and bring them back to God. 3. They ſhall have right to everlaſting glory when this life is ended, and ſhall be raiſed up thereto at the laſt; Beſides many excellent priviledges in the way, in Means, preſervation, and Proviſion, and the foretaſte of what they ſhall enjoy hereafter: all theſe Benefits the Goſpel offereth to them that will have Chriſt on his reaſonable terms. The ſumm of all is in 1 *John* 5. 11, 12. *This is the Record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.*

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II. *WHat this ſin of the making light of the Goſpel is?* 1. To make light of the Goſpel, is, to take no great heed to what is ſpoken, as if it were not a certain Truth, or elſe were a matter that little concerned them, or as if God had not written theſe things for them. 2. When the Goſpel doth not *affect* men, or go to their *hearts*; but though they ſeem to attend to what

what is ſaid; yet men are not *awakened* by it from their ſecurity, nor doth it work in any meaſure ſuch holy paſſion in their ſouls, as matters of ſuch everlaſting Conſequence ſhould do; this is making light of the Goſpel of Salvation. When we tell men what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered for their ſouls, and it ſcarce moveth them: We tell them of keen and cutting truths, but nothing will pierce them; We can make them hear, but we cannot make them feel; Our words take up in the porch of their ears and fancies, but will not enter into the inward parts; as if we ſpake to men that had no hearts or feeling; this is a making light of Chriſt and Salvation, *Acts* 28. 26, 27. hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand: ſeeing ye ſhall ſee and ſhall not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxen groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, their eyes are cloſed, *&c.*

3. When men have no high eſtimation of Chriſt and ſalvation, but whatſoever they may ſay with your tongues, or dreamingly and ſpeculatively Believe, yet in their ſerious and practical thoughts, they have a higher eſtimation of the matters of this world, then they have of Chriſt and the ſalvation that he hath purchaſed; this is a making

making light of him. When men account the Doctrine of Christ to be but a matter of words and names, as *Gallio*, *Acts* 18. 4. or as *Festus*, *Acts* 25. 19. a superstitious matter about one Jesus who was dead, and *Paul* saith is alive. Or ask the Preachers of the Gospel as the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17. 18. *What will this babler say?* This is contempt of Christ.

4. When men are informed of the truths of the Gospel, and on what terms Christ and his benefits may be had, and how it is the will of God that they should *Believe* and *Accept* the offer; and that he *commandeth* them to do it upon pain of damnation; and yet men *will* not consent, unless they could have Christ on terms of their own: They will not part with their worldly contents, nor lay down their pleasures and profits, and honour at his feet, as being content to take so much of them only as he will give them back, and as is consistent with his will and interest, but think it is a hard saying, that they must forsake all in Resolution for Christ; this is a making light of him and their salvation. When men might have part in him and all his Benefits if they *would*, and they *will* not, unless they may keep the world too; and are resolved to please their

flesh,

fleſh, whatever comes of it; this is a high contempt of Chriſt and everlaſting life. *Mat.* 13. 21,22. *Luke* 18.23. you may find examples of ſuch as I here deſcribe.

5. When men will promiſe fair, and profeſs their willingneſs to have Chriſt on his terms, and to forſake all for him; but yet *do ſtick* to the world and their ſinful courſes; and when it comes to *practice*, will not be removed by all that Chriſt hath done and ſaid: this is making light of Chriſt and ſalvation, *Jer.* 42.5 compared with 43.2.

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III. THE cauſes of this ſin are the next thing to be enquired after. It may ſeem a wonder that ever men that have the uſe of their reaſon, ſhould be ſo ſottiſh as to make light of matters of ſuch conſequence. But the cauſe is;

1. Some men underſtand not the very ſenſe of the words of the Goſpel, when they hear it, and how can they be taken with that which they underſtand not? Though we ſpeak to them in plain Engliſh, and ſtudy to ſpeak it as plain as we can; yet people have ſo eſtranged themſelves from God, and the matters of their own happineſs, that they know not what we ſay, as if we ſpoke in another

another language, and as if they were under that Judgement, *Isa.*28.11. with ſtammering lips, and with another tongue will he ſpeak to this people.

2. Some that do underſtand the *words* that we ſpeak, yet becauſe they are carnal, underſtand not the *matter*: for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. They are earthly, and theſe things are heavenly, *John* 3. 12. The things of the Spirit are not well known by bare hearſay, but by a ſpiritual taſte, which none have but thoſe that are taught by the Holy Ghoſt, 1 *Cor.*2. 12. that we may know the things that are given us of God.

3. A carnal mind apprehendeth not a *ſuitableneſs* in theſe ſpiritual and heavenly things to his mind, and therefore he ſets light by them, and hath no mind of them. When you tell him of everlaſting glory, he heareth you as if you were perſwading him to go play with the Sun: they are matters of another world, and out of his element; and therefore he hath no more delight in them then a Fiſh would have to be in the faireſt Meadow, or then a ſwine hath in a Jewel, or a Dog in a piece of Gold: They may

may be good to others, but he cannot apprehend them as ſuitable to him, becauſe he hath a nature that is otherwiſe inclined: he ſavoureth not the things of the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 5.

4. The main cauſe of the ſlighting of Chriſt and ſalvation, is, a ſecret root of *unbelief* in mens hearts. Whatſoever they may pretend, they do not ſoundly and throughly *believe* the Word of God: they are taught in general to ſay, *the Goſpel is true*; but they never ſaw the *Evidence* of its truth ſo far as throughly to perſwade them of it; nor have they got their ſouls ſetled on the Infallibility of Gods Teſtimony, nor conſidered of the truth of the particular Doctrines revealed in the Scripture, ſo far as ſoundly to believe them. Oh did you all but *ſoundly Believe* the words of this Goſpel, of the evil of ſin, of the need of Chriſt, and what he hath done for you, and what you muſt *be* and *do* if ever you will be ſaved by him; and what will become of you for ever, if you do it not; I dare ſay, it would cure the contempt of Chriſt and you would not make ſo light of the matters of your ſalvation. But men do not *believe* while they ſay they do, and would face us down that they do, and verily think that they do themſelves. There is a root of bit-

terneſs, and an evil heart of unbelief, that makes them depart from the living God, *Heb.*2.12. and 4.1, 2, 6. Tell any man in this Congregation, that he ſhall have a gift of 10000 li. if he will but go to *London* for it, if he believe you, he will go; but if he believe not, he will not; and if he will not go, you may be ſure he believeth not, ſuppoſing that he is able. I know a ſlight belief may ſtand with a wicked life: Such as men have of the truth of a prognoſtication, *it may be true and it may be falſe*; but a *true and ſound* belief is not conſiſtent with ſo great neglect of the things that are Believed.

5. Chriſt and ſalvation are made light of by the world, becauſe of their deſperate hardneſs of heart. The heart is hard naturally, and by cuſtom in ſinning made more hard, eſpecially by long abuſe of mercy, and neglect of the means of grace, and reſiſting the Spirit of God. Hence it is that men are turned into ſuch ſtones: and till God cure them of the ſtone of the heart, no wonder if they *feel* not what they know, or regard not what we ſay, but make light of all; tis hard preaching a ſtone into tears, or making a rock to tremble. You may ſtand over a dead body long enough

and

and say to it, *Oh thou carcass, when thou hast lain rotting and mouldred to dust till the Resurrection, God will then call thee to account for thy sin, and cast thee into everlasting fire*, before you can make it feel what you say, or fear the misery that is never so truly threatned: when mens hearts are like the high-way that is trodden to hardness by long custome in sinning, or like the clay that is hardned to a stone by the heat of those mercies that should have melted them into Repentance: when they have consciences seared with an hot Iron, as the Apostle speaks, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. No wonder then if they be past feeling, and working all uncleanness with greedines, do make light of Christ and everlasting glory. Oh that this were not the case of too many of our hearers! Had we but *living souls* to speak to, they would hear, and feel, and not make light of what we say. I know they are naturally alive, but they are spiritually dead, as Scripture witnesseth, *Ephes.* 2. 3. Oh if there were but one spark of the life of grace in them, the Doctrine of Salvation by Jesus Christ, would appear to them to be the weightiest business in the world. Oh how confident should I be, me thinks, to prevail with men, and to take them off this

world, and bring them to mind the matter of another world, if I ſpake but to men that had life and ſenſe, and reaſon! But when we ſpeak to blocks and dead men, how ſhould we be regarded? Oh how ſad, a caſe are theſe ſouls in, that are fallen under this fearful judgement of ſpiritual madneſs and deadneſs! To have a blind mind, and an hard heart, to be ſottiſh and ſenſleſs, *Mark* 4. 12. *John* 12. 40. leſt they ſhould be converted, and their ſin ſhould be forgiven them.

6. Chriſt and ſalvation are made light of by the world, becauſe they are wholly enſlaved to their ſenſe, and taken up with lower things: the matters of another world are out of ſight, and ſo far from their ſenſes, that they cannot regard them; but preſent things are nearer them, in their eyes, and in their hands: there muſt be a living faith to prevail over ſenſe, before men can be ſo taken with things that are not ſeen, though they have the Word of God for their ſecurity, as to neglect and let go things that are ſtill before their eyes. Senſe works with great advantage, and therefore doth much in reſiſting faith where it is. No wonder then if it carry all before it, where there is no true and lively faith to reſiſt, and to lead

lead the ſoul to higher things: this cauſe of making light of Chriſt and ſalvation, is expreſſed here in my Text: one went to his farm, and another to his merchandize: men have houſes and lands to look after: they have wife and children to mind, they have their body and outward eſtate to regard, therefore they forget that they have a God, a Redeemer, a ſoul to minde; theſe matters of the world are ſtill with them. They *ſee* theſe, but they *ſee not* God, nor Chriſt, nor their ſouls, nor everlaſting glory. Theſe things are *near* at hand, and therefore work *naturally*, and ſo work *forcibly*; but the other are thought on as a great way off, and therefore too diſtant to work on their affections, or be at the preſent ſo much regarded by them. Their body hath life and ſenſe, and therefore if they want meat, or drink, or cloaths, will feel their want, and tell them of it, and give them no reſt till their wants be ſupplyed; and therefore they cannot make light of their bodily neceſſities; but their ſouls in ſpiritual reſpects are dead, and therefore feel not their wants, but will let them alone in their greateſt neceſſities; and be as quiet when they are ſtarved and languiſhing to deſtruction, as if all were well and nothing ayled them.

And hereupon poor people are wholly taken up in providing for the body, as if they had nothing else to minde. They have their trades and callings to follow, and so much to do from morning to night, that they can find no time for matters of salvation; Christ would teach them, but they have no leisure to hear him: the Bible is before them, but they cannot have while to read it: A Minister is in the Town with them, but they cannot have while to go to enquire of him what they should do to be saved: And when they do hear, their hearts are so full of the world, and carried away with these lower matters, that they cannot minde the things which they hear. They are so full of the thoughts, and desires, and cares of this world, that there is no room to pour into them the water of life: The cares of the world do choak the Word, and make it become unfruitful, *Matth.* 13.22. Men cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon, but they will lean to the one, and despise the other, *Matth.* 6. 24. He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him 1 *John* 2. 15, 16. Men cannot choose but see light by Christ and salvation, while they see so much by any thing on earth; it is that which is highly esteemed among men,

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abominable in the ſight of God, *Luk.* 16. 15. Oh this is the ruine of many thouſand ſouls! It would grieve the heart of any honeſt Chriſtian, to ſee how eagerly this vain world is followed everywhere, and how little men ſet by Chriſt, and the world to come; to compare the care that men have for the world, with the care of their ſouls; and the time that they lay out on the world, with that time they lay out for their ſalvation: To ſee how the world fils their mouths, their hands, their houſes, their hearts; and Chriſt hath little more then a bare title: to come into their company, and hear no diſcourſe but of the world, to come into their houſes, and hear and ſee nothing but for the world, as if this world would laſt for ever, or would purchaſe them another. When I ask ſometime the Miniſters of the Goſpel how their labours ſucceed, they tell me, *People continue ſtill the ſame, and give up themſelves wholly to the world, ſo that they minde not what Miniſters ſay to them, nor will give any full entertainment to the Word, and all becauſe of the deluding world*: And oh that too many Miniſters themſelves did not make light of that Chriſt whom they preach, being drawn away with the love of this world! In a word, men of a worldly

disposition do judge of things according to worldly advantages; therefore Christ is slighted, *Isa.*53.3. *He is despised and rejected of men, they hide their faces from him, and esteem, him not, as seeing no beauty or comliness in him, that they should desire him.*

7. Christ and salvation are made light of, because men do not soberly *consider* of the truth and weight of these necessary things. They suffer not their minds so long to *dwell* upon them, till they procure a due esteem, and deeply affect their heart; did they believe them, and not *consider* of them, how should they work? Oh when men have reason given them to Think and Consider of the things that most concern them, and yet they will not use it, this causeth their contempt.

8. Christ and salvation are made light of, because men were never *sensible* of their *sin and misery*, and *extream necessity* of Christ and his salvation: their eyes were never opened to see *themselves* as they are; nor their hearts soundly humbled in the sense of their condition: if this were done, they would soon be brought to value a Saviour: a truly broken heart can no more make light of Christ and salvation, then a hungry man of his food, or a sick man of the

the means that would give him eaſe: but till then, our words cannot have acceſs to their hearts: while ſin and miſery is made light of, Chriſt and ſalvation will be made light of: but when theſe are perceived an intolerable burden, then nothing will ſerve the turn but Chriſt. Till men be truly humbled, they can venture Chriſt and ſalvation for a luſt, for a little worldly gain, even for leſs then nothing: but when God hath illuminated them, and broken their hearts, then they would give a world for a Chriſt; then they *muſt have Chriſt, or they dye; all things then are loſs and dung to them in regard of the excellent knowledge of Chriſt, Phil.* 3. 8. When they are once pricked in their hearts for ſin and miſery, then they cry out, *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do? Act.* 2. 37. When they are awakned by Gods Judgements, as the poor Jaylor, *Act.* 16. 29. then they cry out, *Sirs, what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* This is the reaſon why God will bring men ſo low by humiliation, before he bring them to ſalvation.

9. Men take occaſion to make light of Chriſt, by the *commonneſs* of the Goſpel; becauſe they do hear of it every day, the *frequency* is an occaſion to dull their affections; I ſay, an Occaſion: for it is no juſt cauſe.

cauſe. Were it a *rarity*, it might take more with them; but *now*, if they hear a Miniſter preach nothing but theſe ſaving Truths, they ſay, *We have theſe every day*; They make not light of their bread or drink, their health or life, becauſe they poſſeſs them *every day*; they make not light of the Sun, becauſe it ſhineth *every day*; at leaſt they ſhould not, for the mercy is the greater; but Chriſt and ſalvation are made light of, becauſe they hear of them often; *This is*, ſay they, *a good plain dry Sermon*: *Pearls* are trod in the dirt where they are *common*; They loath this dry Manna, *Prov.27.7.* The full ſoul loaths the hony-comb; but to the hungry every bitter thing is ſweet.

10. Chriſt and ſalvation are made light of, becauſe of this disjunctive *preſumption*, either that he is ſure enough *theirs already*, and God that is ſo merciful, and Chriſt that hath ſuffered ſo much for them, is ſurely reſolved to ſave them, or elſe it may eaſily be obtained at any time, if it be not yet ſo. A conceited *facility* to have a part in Chriſt and ſalvation at any time, doth occaſion men to make light of them. It is true, that grace is *free*, and the offer is univerſal, according to the extent of the preaching of the

the Goſpel; and it is true that men may have Chriſt *when they will*; that is, when they are willing to have him on his terms; but he that hath promiſed thee Chriſt, if thou be willing, hath not promiſed to make thee willing: and if thou art not willing *now*, how canſt thou think thou ſhalt be willing hereafter? If thou canſt make thine own heart willing, why is it not done now? Can you do it better when ſin hath more hardened it, and God may have given thee over to thy ſelf? Oh ſinners! you might do much, though you are not able of your ſelves to come in, if you would now ſubject your ſelves to the working of the Spirit, and ſet in while the gales of grace continue; But did you know what a hard and impoſſible thing it is to be ſo much as willing to have Chriſt and grace, when the heart is given over to it ſelf, and the Spirit hath withdrawn its former Invitations, you would not be ſo confident of your own ſtrength to Believe and Repent: nor would you make light of Chriſt upon ſuch fooliſh confidence. If indeed it be ſo eaſie a matter as you imagine for a ſinner to Believe and Repent at any time; how comes it to paſs that it is done by ſo few, but moſt of the world do periſh in their impenitency, when they have

have all the helps and means that we can afford them? It is true, the thing is very reasonable and easie in it self to a pure nature; but while man is blind and dead, these things are in a sort impossible to him, which are never so easie to others. It is the easiest and sweetest life in the world to a gracious soul to live in the love of God, and the delightful thoughts of the life to come, where all their hope and happiness lieth: But to a worldly carnal heart it is as easie to remove a mountain, as to bring them to this. However, these men are their own condemners; for if they think it so easie a matter to Repent and Believe, and so to have Christ and right to salvation, then have they no excuse for neglecting this which they thought so easie. O wretched impenitent soul! what mean you to say, when God shall ask you, *Why did you not Repent and Love your Redeemer above the world, when you thought it so easie that you could do it at any time?*

IV. *Vſe* 1. WE come now to the Application: and hence you may be informed of the blindneſs and folly of all carnall men: how *contemptible* are their judgements that think Chriſt and ſalvation *contemptible*: and how little reaſon there is why any ſhould be moved by them, or diſcouraged by any of their ſcorns or contradictions.

How ſhall we ſooner know a man to be a fool, then if he knows no difference between Dung and Gold! Is there ſuch a thing as *madneſs* in the world, if that man be not mad, that ſets light by Chriſt and his own ſalvation, while he dayly toyls for the dung of the earth? And yet what pitty is it to ſee that a company of poor ignorant ſouls will be aſhamed of godlineſs, if ſuch men as theſe do but deride them! Or will think hardly of a holy life, if ſuch as theſe do ſpeak againſt it! Hearers, if you ſee any *ſet light* by Chriſt and ſalvation, do you *ſet light* by that mans *wit*, and by his *words*, and hear the reproaches of a holy life, as you would hear the words of a mad man: not with regard, but with a compaſſion of his miſery.

*Vſe* 2.

*Use* 2. WHat wonder if we and our preaching be despised, and the best Ministers complain of ill success, when the Ministry of the Apostles themselve did succeed no better? what wonder if for all that we can say or do, our hearers still set light by Christ and their own salvation, when the Apostles hearers did the same? They that did second their Doctrine by Miracles: if any men could have shaken and torn in pieces the hearts of sinners, they could have done it: If any could have laid them at their feet, and made them all cry out as some, *What shall we do*, it would have been they. You may see then that it is not meerly for want of good preachers that men make light of Christ and salvation: the first news of such a thing as the pardon of sin, and the hopes of glory, and the danger of everlasting misery, would turn the hearts of men within them, if they were as tractable in spiritual matters as in temporal: But alas, it is far other wise. It must not seem any strange thing, nor must it too much discourage the preachers of the Gospel, if when they have said all that they can devise to say to win the hearts of men to

to Christ, the most do still slight him, and whilethey bow the knee to him, and honour him with their lips, do yet set so light by him in their hearts, as to prefer every fleshly pleasure or commodity before him. It will be thus with many: let us be glad that it is not thus with All.

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*Use* 3. BUT for closer application. Seeing this is the great condemning sin, before we enquire after it into the hearts of our hearers, it beseems us to begin at home, and see that we who are Preachers of the Gospel be not guilty of it our selves. The Lord forbid that they that have undertaken the sacred office of revealing the excellencies of Christ to the world, should make light of him themselves, and sleight that salvation which they do daily preach. The Lord knows we are all of us so low in our estimation of Christ, and do this great work so negligently, that we have cause to be ashamed of our best Sermons; but should this sin prevail in us, we were the most miserable of all men. Brethren, I love not censoriousness; yet dare not befriend so vile a sin in my self or others under pretence of avoiding it: especially when

when there is so great necessiity that it should be healed first in them that make it their work to heal it in others. O that there were no cause to complain that Christ and salvation are made light of by the Preachers of it. But, 1. Do not the negligent studies of some speak it out? 2. Doth not their dead and drousie preaching declare it? do not they make light of the Doctrine they preach, that do it it as if they were half asleep, and feel not what they speak themselves?

3. Doth not the carelesnes of some mens private endeavours discover it? what do they for souls? how slightly do they reprove sin? how little do they when they are out of the Pulpit for the saving of mens souls?

4. Doth not the continued neglect of those things wherein the intereſt of Christ consisteth discover it? 1. The Churches Purity and Reformation, 2. Its Unity.

5. Doth not the covetous and worldly lives of too many discover it, losing advantages for mens souls, for a little gain to themselves? And most of this is because men are Preachers before they are Christians, and tell men of that which they never felt themselves. Of all men on earth, there are few that are in so sad a condition as such

such Ministers: and if indeed they do believe that Scripture which they preach, methinks it should be terrible to them in their studying and preaching it.

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*Use.* 4. BEloved hearers; the office that God hath called us to, is, by declaring the glory of his grace, to help under Christ to the saving of mens souls. I hope you think not that I come hither to day on any other errand. The Lord knows I had not set a foot out of doors but in hope to succeed in this work for your souls. I have considered and often considered, what is the matter that so many thousands should perish when God hath done so much for their salvation; and I find this that is mentioned in my Text is the cause. It is one of the wonders of the world, that when God hath so loved the world as to send his Son, and Christ hath made a satisfaction by his death sufficient for them all, and offereth the benefits of it so freely to them, even without money or price, that yet the most of the world should perish; yea the most of those that are thus called by his Word! Why here is the reason, when Christ hath done all this, men

make light of it. God hath shewed that *he* is not unwilling; and Christ hath shewed that *he* is not unwilling that men should be restored to Gods favour and be saved; but men are actually unwilling *themselves*. God takes not *pleasure* in the death of sinners, but rather that they return and live, *Ezek.* 33.11. But men take such *pleasure* in sin, that they will dye before they will return. The Lord Jesus was content to be their Physitian, and hath provided them a sufficient plaister of his own blood: but if men make light of it, and will not apply it, what wonder if they perish after all? The Scripture giveth us the reason of their perdition. This sad experience tells us the most of the world is guilty of. It is a most lamentable thing to see how most men do spend their care, their time, their pains for known vanities, while God and Glory are cast aside: That he who is *all* should seem to them as *nothing*; and that which is *nothing* should seem to them as good as *all*; that God should set mankind in such a race where heaven or hell is their certain end, and that they should set down, and loyter or run after the childish toyes of the world, and so much forget the prize that they should run for. Were it but possible for one

of us to see the *whole* of this business, as the all-seeing God doth; to see at one view both heaven and hell which men are so neer, and see what most men in the world are minding, and what they are doing every day, it would be the saddest sight that could be imagined. Oh how should we marvail at their madness, and lament their self-delusion! Oh poor distracted world! what is it that you run after? and what is it that you neglect? If God had never told them what they were sent into the world to do, or whether they were going, or what was before them in another world, then they had been excusable; but he hath told them over and over, till they were weary of it. Had he left it doubtful, there had been some excuse; but it is his sealed Word, and they profess to believe it, and would take it ill of us if we should question whether they do believe it or not.

Beloved, I come not to accuse any of you particularly of this crime: but seeing it is the commoneſt cause of mens Destruction, I suppose you will judge it the fittest matter for our enquiry, and deserving our greatest care for the cure. To which end I shall 1. Endeavour the *Conviction* of the guilty. 2. Shall give them such considera-

tions as may tend to humble and reform them. 3. I shall conclude with such direction as may help them that are willing to escape the destroying power of this sin. And for the first, consider,

1. It is the case of most sinners to think themselves freest from those sins that they are most enslaved to; and one reason why we cannot reform them, is, because we cannot convince them of their guilt. It is the nature of sin so far to blind and befool the sinner, that he knoweth not what he doth, but thinketh he is free from it when it raigneth in him, or when he is committing it: It bringeth men to be so much unacquainted with themselves, that they know not what they think, or what they mean and intend, nor what they love or hate, much less what they are habituated and disposed to. They are alive to sin, and dead to all the Reason, Consideration and Resolution that should recover them, as if it were only by their sinning that we must know they are alive. May I hope that you that hear me to day, are but willing to know the Truth of your case, and then I shall be encouraged to proceed to an enquiry. God will judge impartially; why should not we do so? Let me therefore by these following Questions try whe-

ther none of you are ſlighters of Chriſt and your own ſalvation. And follow me, I beſeech you, by putting them cloſe to your own hearts, and faithfully anſwering them.

1. Things that men highly value will be *remembred*, they will be matter of their freeſt and ſweeteſt thoughts; this is a known caſe.

Do not thoſe then make light of Chriſt and ſalvation, that think of them ſo ſeldom and coldly in compariſon of other things? Follow thy own heart man, and obſerve what it daily runneth out after; and then Judge whether it make not light of Chriſt.

We cannot perſwade men to one hours ſober conſideration what they ſhould do for an intereſt in Chriſt, or in thankfulneſs for his love, and yet they will not believe that they make light of him.

2. Things that we highly value will be matter of our Diſcourſe: The Judgement and heart will command the tongue. Freely and delightfully will our ſpeech run after them; this alſo is a known caſe.

Do not thoſe then make light of Chriſt and ſalvation, that ſhun the mention of his name, unleſs it be in a vain or ſinful uſe? Thoſe that love not the company where

Christ and salvation is much talked of; but think it troublesome precise discourse: That had rather hear some merry jests, or idle tales, or talk of their riches or business in the world. When you may follow them from morning to night, and scarce have a savory word of Christ; but perhaps some sleight and weary mention of him sometimes; judge whether these make not light of Christ and salvation. How seriously do they talk of the world? *Psal.* 144.8,11. and speak vanity! but how heartlesly do they make mention of Christ and salvation!

3. The things that we highly value, we would secure the possession of, and therefore would take any convenient course to have all doubts and fears about them well resolved. Do not those men then make light of Christ and salvation, that have lived 20. or 30 years in uncertainty whether they have any part in these or not, and yet never seek out for the right resolution of their doubts? Are all that hear me this day certain they shall be saved? Oh that they were; Oh had you not made light of salvation, you could not so easily bear such doubtings of it; you could not rest till you had made it sure, or done your best to make it sure. Have you no body to enquire of th

that might help you in ſuch a work? Why you have miniſters that are purpoſely appointed to that office. Have you gone to them and told them the doubtfulneſs of your caſe, and asked their help in the judgeing of your condition? Alas Miniſters may ſit in their ſtudies from one year to another, before ten perſons among 1000. will come to them on ſuch an errand! Do not theſe make light of Chriſt and ſalvation? when the Goſpel pierceth the heart indeed, they cry out, *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do to be ſaved!* *Acts* 16. 30. and 9.6. trembling and aſtoniſhed *Paul* cryes out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And ſo did the convinced Jews to *Peter*, *Acts* 2. 37. But when hear we ſuch Queſtions?

4. The things that we value, do *deeply affect* us, and ſome motions will be in the heart according to our eſtimation of them. Oh Sirs, If men made not light of theſe things, what *working* would there be in the hearts of all our hearers? What ſtrange affections would it raiſe in them to hear of the matters of the world to come! How would their hearts melt before the power of the Goſpel? what ſorrow would be wrought in the diſcovery of their ſin? what aſtoniſhment at the conſideration of their miſery?

what unſpeakable joy at the glad tidings of Salvation by the blood of Chriſt? what reſolution would be raiſed in them upon the diſcovery of their duty? Oh what hearers ſhould we have if it were not for this ſin! whereas now, we are liker to weary them, or preach them aſleep with matters of this unſpeakable moment. We talk to them of Chriſt and ſalvation, till we make their heads ake: Little would one think by their careleſs carriage, that they heard and regarded what we ſaid, or thought we ſpoke at all to them.

5. Our eſtimation of things will be ſeen in the diligence of our endeavours. That which we highlyeſt value, we ſhall think no pains too great to obtain. Do not thoſe men then make light of Chriſt and ſalvation, that think all too much that they do for them, that murmur at his ſervice, and think it too grievous for them to endure? that ask of his ſervice as *Judas* of the ointment; *What need this waſt? cannot men be ſaved without ſo much ado? this is more ado then needs.* For the world they will labour all the day, and all their lives; but for Chriſt and ſalvation they are afraid of doing too much. Let us preach to them as long as we will, we cannot bring them to reliſh or reſolve

ſolve upon a life of holineſs. Follow them to their houſes, and you ſhall not hear them read a Chapter, nor call upon God with their families once a day; Nor will they allow him that one day in ſeven which he hath ſeparated to his ſervice. But pleaſure, or worldly buſineſs, or idleneſs muſt have a part. And many of them are ſo far hardened, as to reproach them that will not be as mad as themſelves. And is not Chriſt worth the ſeeking? Is not everlaſting ſalvation worth more then all this? Doth not that ſoul make light of all theſe, that thinks his eaſe more worth they they? Let but common ſenſe judge.

6. That which we moſt highly value, we think we cannot *buy too dear*: Chriſt and ſalvation are freely given, and yet the moſt of men go without them, becauſe they cannot enjoy the world and them together. They are called but to part with that which would hinder them from Chriſt, and they will not do it. They are called but to give God his own, and to reſign all to his will, and let go the profits and pleaſures of this world, when they muſt let go either Chriſt or them, and they will not. They think this too dear a bargain, and ſay they cannot ſpare theſe things: They muſt hold their cre-

credit with men; They must look to their estates: how shall they live else? They must have their pleasure, whatsoever becomes of Christ and salvation: As if they could live without Christ better then without these: as if they were afraid of being losers by Christ, or could make a saving match by losing their souls to gain the world. Christ hath told us over and over, that if we will not forsake all for him, we cannot be his Disciples, *Mat.* 10. Far are these men from forsaking all, and yet will needs think that they are his Disciples indeed.

7. That which men highly esteem, they would *help their friends to* as well as themselves. Do not those men make light of Christ and salvation, that can take so much care to leave their children portions in the world, and do so little to help them to heaven? That provide outward necessaries so carefully for their families, but do so little to the saving of their souls? Their neglected children and friends will witness, that either Christ or their childrens souls, or both, were made light of.

8. That which men highly esteem, they will so diligently seek after, that you may see it in the *success*, if it be a matter within their

their reach. You may ſee how many make light of Chriſt, by the little knowledge they have of him, and the little communion with him, and communication from him; and the little, yea, none of his ſpecial graces in them. Alas! how many Miniſters can ſpeak it to the ſorrow of their hearts, that many of their people know almoſt nothing of Chriſt, though they hear of him dayly! nor know they what they muſt do to be ſaved; If we ask them an account of theſe things, they anſwer as if they underſtood not what we ſay to them, and tell us they are no Scholers, and therefore think they are excuſable for their ignorance. Oh if theſe men had not made light of Chriſt, and their ſalvation, but had beſtowed but half ſo much pains to know and enjoy him, as they have done to underſtand the matters of their Trades and Callings in the world, they would not have been ſo ignorant as they are: They make light of theſe things, and therefore will not be at the pains to ſtudy or learn them. When men that can learn the hardeſt trade in a few years, have not learned a Catechiſm, nor how to underſtand their Creed, under twentie or thirtie years preaching, nor cannot abide to be Queſtioned about ſuch things; doth not this

ſhew

ſhew that they have ſlighted them in their hearts? How will theſe deſpiſers of Chriſt and Salvation be able one day to look him in the face, and to give an account of theſe neglects?

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THus much I have ſpoken in order to your Conviction. Do not ſome of your conſciences by this time ſmite you, and ſay, *I am the man that have made light of my ſalvation?* If they do not, it is becauſe you make light of it ſtill, for all that is ſaid to you. But becauſe, if it be the will of the Lord, I would fain have this damning diſtemper cured, and am loth to leave you in ſuch a deſperate condition, if I knew how to remedy it; I will give you ſome conſiderations, which may move you, if you be men of reaſon and underſtanding, to look better about you; and I beſeech you weigh them, and make uſe of them as we go, and lay open your hearts to the work of grace, and ſadly bethink you what a caſe you are in, if you prove ſuch as make light of Chriſt.

Conſider, 1. Thou makeſt light of him that made not light of thee who didſt deſerve it. Thou waſt worthy of nothing but contempt. As a man, what art thou but a worm

worm to God? As a ſinner, thou art far viler then a toad: yet Chriſt was ſo far from making light of thee and thy happineſs, that he came down into the fleſh, and lived a life of ſuffering, and offered himſelf a ſacrifice to the Juſtice which thou hadſt provoked, that thy miſerable ſoul might have a remedy. It is no leſs then miracles of love and mercy that he hath ſhewed to us: and yet ſhall we ſlight them after all?

Angels admire them, whom they leſs concern, 1 *Pet* 1. 12. and ſhall redeemed ſinners make light of them? What barbarous, yea deviliſh, yea worſe then deviliſh ingratitude is this? the Devils never had a Saviour offered them, but thou haſt, and doſt thou yet make light of him?

2. Conſider the work of mans ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, is the maſter-piece of all the works of God, wherein he would have his love and mercy to be magnified. As the Creation declareth his goodneſs and power, ſo doth Redemption his goodneis and mercy; he hath contrived the very frame of his worſhip ſo, that it ſhall much conſiſt in the magnifying of this work; and after all this will you make light of it? His name is wonderful, *Iſa.* 9. 6. He did the work that none could do. *John* 15. 24. Greater love could

ould none ſhew then his, *John* 15. 13 How great was the evil and miſery that he delivered us from? the good procured for us? all are wonders, from his birth to his aſcention; from our new birth to our glorification, all are wonders of matchleſs mercy. And yet do you make light of them!

3. You make light of matters of *greateſt excellency and moment in the world*: you know not what it is that you ſleight: had you well known, you could not have done it. As Chriſt ſaid to the woman of *Samaria*, *John* 4. 10. hadſt thou known who it is that ſpeaketh to thee, thou wouldſt have asked of him the waters of life; Had they *known*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, 1 *Cor*. 2. 8. So, had you known what Chriſt is, you would not have made light of him; Had you been one day in heaven, and but ſeen what they poſſeſs, and ſeen alſo what miſerable ſouls muſt endure that are ſhut out, you would never ſure have made ſo light of Chriſt again.

Oh Sirs, it is no trifles or jeſting matters that the Goſpel ſpeaks of. I muſt needs profeſs to you, that when I have the moſt ſerious thoughts of theſe things my ſelf, I am ready to marvail that ſuch amazing matters

do

do not overwhelm the ſouls of men: that the greatneſs of the ſubject doth not ſo overmatch our underſtandings and affections, as even to drive men beſide themſelves, but that God hath always ſomewhat allayed it by the diſtance: much more that men ſhould be ſo blockiſh as to make light of them. Oh Lord, that men did but know what everlaſting glory, and everlaſting torments are; Would they then hear us as they do? Would they read and think of theſe things as they do? I profeſs I have been ready to wonder when I have heard ſuch weighty things delivered, how people can forbear crying out in the congregation; much more, how they can reſt till they have gone to their Miniſters and learned what they ſhould do to be ſaved, that this great buſineſs might be put out of doubt. Oh that heaven and hell ſhould work no more on men! Oh that everlaſtingneſs ſhould work no more! Oh how can you forbear when you are alone to think with you ſelves what it is to be everlaſtingly in Joy or in Torment! I wonder that ſuch thoughts do not break your ſleep; and that they come not in your mind when you are about your labour! I wonder how you can almoſt do any thing elſe: How can you have any

quietneſs

quietneſs in your minds: how you can eat, or drink, or reſt, till you have got ſome ground of everlaſting conſolations! Is that a *man* or a *corps* that is not affected with matters of this moment? That can be readier to ſleep, then to tremble, when he heareth how he muſt ſtand at the Barr of God? Is that a *man*, or *a clod of clay*, that can riſe and lie down without being deeply affected with his everlaſting eſtate? that can follow his worldly buſineſs, and make nothing of the great buſineſs of ſalvation or damnation; and that when they know it is hard at hand? Truly Sirs, when I think of the weight of the matter, I wonder at the very beſt of Gods Saints upon earth, that they are no better, and do no more in ſo weighty a caſe. I wonder at thoſe whom the world accounteth more holy then needs, and ſcorns for making too much ado; that they can put off Chriſt and their ſouls with ſo little: that they pour not out their ſouls in every ſupplication: that they are not more taken up with God; that their thoughts be not more ſerious in preparation for their account. I wonder that they be not an hundred times more ſtrict in their lives; and more laborious and unwearyed in ſtriving for the crown, then they are. And for my ſelf,

ſelf, as I am aſhamed of my dull and careleſs heart, and of my ſlow and unprofitable courſe of life; ſo the Lord knows, I am aſhamed of every Sermon that I preach: when I think *what* I have been ſpeaking of, and *who* ſent me; and what mens ſalvation or damnation is ſo much concerned in it. I am ready to tremble, leſt God ſhould judge me as a ſlighter of his truth, and the ſouls of men, and leſt in the beſt Sermon I ſhould be guilty of their blood. Me thinks we ſhould not ſpeak a word to men in matters of ſuch conſequence, without tears, or the greateſt earneſtneſs that poſſibly we can: were not we too much guilty of the ſin which we reprove, it would be ſo. Whether we are alone, or in company, me thinks our end, and ſuch an end, ſhould ſtill be in our mind, and as before our eyes; and we ſhould ſooner forget any thing, and ſet light by any thing, or by all things, then by this,

Conſider 4. Who is it that ſends this weighty Meſſage to you? Is it not God himſelf? Shall the God of heaven ſpeak, and men make light of it? You would not ſlight the voice of an Angel or a Prince.

5. *Whoſe* ſalvation is it that you make light of? Is it not your own? Are you no more near or dear to your ſelves, then to

make light of your *own* happineſs or miſery Why Sirs, do you not care whether you be ſaved or damned? Is ſelf-love loſt? Are you turned your own enemies? As he that ſlighteth his meat doth ſlight his life; ſo if you ſlight Chriſt, whatſoever you may think, you will find it was your own ſalvation that you ſlighted. Hear what he ſaith, *Proverbs* 1. 36. *All they that hate me, love death.*

6. Your ſin is greater, in that you profeſs to Believe the Goſpel which you make ſo light of. For a profeſſed Infidel to do it, that believes not that ever Chriſt died, or roſe again; or doth not believe that there is an heaven or hell, this were no ſuch marvel: but for you that make it your Creed, and your very Religion, and call your ſelves Chriſtians, and have been baptized into the faith, and ſeemed to ſtand to it, this is the wonder, and hath no excuſe. What! believe that you ſhall live in endleſs Joy or Torment, and yet make no more of it, to eſcape Torment, and obtain that Joy. What! believe that God will ſhortly judge you, and yet make no more preparation for it? Either ſay plainly, *I am no Chriſtian, I do not believe theſe wonderful things! I will believe nothing but what I ſee*; or elſe let you hear

hearts be affected with your Belief, and live as you ſay you do believe. What do you think when you repeat the Creed, and mention Chriſts Judgement and everlaſting life?

7. What are theſe things you ſet ſo much by, as to prefer them before Chriſt and the ſaving of your ſouls? Have you found a better friend, a greater and ſurer happineſs then this? Good Lord! What dung is it that men make ſo much of, while they ſet ſo light by everlaſting glory! What toyes are they that they are daily taken up with, while matters of life and death are neglected! Why Sirs, If you had every one a Kingdom in your hopes, what were it in compariſon of the everlaſting Kingdom? I cannot but look upon all the glory and dignity of this world, Lands and Lordſhips, Crowns and Kingdoms, even as on ſome brainſick beggarly fellow, that borroweth fine cloaths, and playes the part of a King or a Lord for an hour on a ſtage, and then comes down, and the ſport is ended, and they are beggars again. Were it not for Gods intereſt in the Authority of Magiſtrates, or for the ſervice they might do him, I ſhould judge no better of them. For as to their own glory, it is but a ſmoak; what

matter is it whether you live poor or rich, unleſs it were a greater matter to *die* rich then it is? You know well enough that death levels all: what matter is it at Judgement, whether you be to anſwer for the life of a rich man, or a poor man? Is *Dives* then any better then *Lazarus*? Oh that men knew what a poor deceiving ſhadow they graſp at, while they let go the everlaſting ſubſtance! The ſtrongeſt and richeſt, and moſt voluptuous ſinners, do but lay in fuel for their ſorrows, while they think they are gathering together a treaſure. Alas! they are aſleep, and dream that they are happy; but when they awake, what a change will they finde? Their crown is made of thorns: their pleaſure hath ſuch a ſting as will ſtick in the heart through all eternity, except unfeigned Repentance do prevent it. Oh how ſadly will theſe wretches be convinced ere long what a fooliſh bargain they made in ſelling Chriſt and their ſalvation for theſe trifles! Let your farms and merchandize then ſave you if they can; and do that for you that Chriſt would have done. Cry then to thy *Baal* to ſave thee! Oh what thoughts have drunkards and adulterers, *&c.* of Chriſt, that will not part with the baſeſt luſt for him! For a piece of bread,

faith

faith *Solomon*, ſuch men do tranſgreſs, *Prov.* 28.21.

8. To ſet ſo light by Chriſt and ſalvation is a certain mark that thou haſt no part in them, and if thou ſo continue, that Chriſt will ſet *as light* by thee: thoſe that honour him he will honour, and thoſe that deſpiſe him ſhall be lightly eſteemed, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. Thou wilt feel one day that thou canſt not live without him. Thou wilt confeſs then thy need of him; and then thou maiſt go look for a Saviour where thou wilt; for he will be no Saviour for thee hereafter, that wouldſt not value him, and ſubmit to him here: Then who will prove the loſer by thy contempt? Oh what a thing will it be for a poor miſerable ſoul to cry to Chriſt for help in the day of extremity, and to hear ſo ſad an anſwer as this! Thou didſt ſet light by me and my Law in the day of thy proſperity, and I will now ſet as light by thee in thy adverſity. Read *Prov.* 1. 24. to the end. Thou that as *Eſau* didſt ſell thy birthright for a meſs of Pottage, ſhalt then find no place for repentance, though thou ſeek it with tears, *Heb.* 12. 17. Do you think that Chriſt ſhed his blood to ſave them that continue to make light of it? and to ſave them that value a cup of drink or a luſt be-

fore his salvation? I tell you Sirs, though *you* set so light by Christ and salvation, *God* doth not so: He will not give them on such terms as these: He valueth the blood of his Son, and the everlasting glory; and he will make *you* value them, if ever you have them. Nay, this will be thy condemnation, and leaveth no remedy. All the world cannot save him that sets light by Christ. *Heb.* 2.3. *Luke* 14.24. None of them shall taste of his Supper, *Matth.* 10.37. Now can you blame him to deny you what you made light of your selves. Can you find fault if you miss of the Salvation which you slighted?

9. The time is near when Christ and salvation will not be made light of as now they are. When God hath shaken those careless souls out of their bodies, and you must answer for all your sins in your own name. O then what would you give for a Saviour, when a thousand Bills shall be brought against you, and none to relieve you, then you will consider, *Oh, Christ would now have stood between me and the wrath of God: had I but despised him, he would have answered for me.* When you see the world hath left you, and your companions in sin have deceived themselves and you, and all your merry dayes are gone

gone; then what would you give for that Christ and salvation that now you account not worth your labour? Do you think when you see the Judgement set, and you are doomed to everlasting perdition for your wickedness, that you should then make as light of Christ as now? Why will you not judge now, as you know you shall judge then? Will he then be worth ten thousand worlds, and is he not now worth your highest estimation, and dearest affection?

10. God will not only deny thee that salvation thou madest light of, bnt he will take from thee all that which thou didst value before it: He that most highly esteems Christ, shall have him and the creatures so far as they are good here, and him without the creature hereafter, because the creature is not useful; and he that sets more by the creature then by Christ, shall have some of the creature without Christ here, and neither Christ nor it hereafter.

So much of these considerations, which may shew the true face of this hainous sin.

What think you now friends of this business? Do you not see by this time what a case that soul is in that maketh light of Christ and salvation? What need then is there that you should take heed lest this

ſhould prove your own caſe? The Lord knows it is too common a caſe. Whoever is found guilty at the laſt of this ſin, it were better for that man he had never been born. It were better for him he had been a Turk or Indian, that never had heard the name of a Saviour, and that never had ſalvation offered to him: For ſuch men have no cloak for their ſin, *John* 15. 22. Beſides all the reſt of their ſins, they have this killing ſin to anſwer for, which will undo them. And this will aggravate their miſery: *That* Chriſt whom they ſet light by, muſt be their Judge, and for *this* ſin will he judge them. Oh that ſuch would now conſider how they will anſwer that Queſtion that Chriſt puts to their predeceſſors, *Matth.* 23. 33. *How will ye eſcape the damnation of hell?* or *Heb.* 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?* Can you eſcape without a Chriſt? or will a deſpiſed Chriſt ſave you then? If he be accurſed that ſets light by Father or Mother, *Deut.* 27. 16. what then is he that ſets light by Chriſt? It was the hainous ſin of the Jews, that among them were found ſuch as ſet light by Father and Mother, *Ezek.* 22. 7. but among us, men ſlight the Father of Spirits. In the name of God Brethren, I beſeech you to conſider how you will then

bear

bear his Anger which you now make light of? You that cannot make light of a little ſickneſs or want, or of natural Death, no not of a tooth-ach, but groan as if you were undone, how will you then make light of the fury of the Lord, which will burn againſt the contemners of his grace? Doth it not behove you beforehand to think of theſe things?

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HItherto I have been convincing you of the evil of the ſin, and the danger that followeth: I come now to know your Reſolution for the time to come. What ſay you? Do you mean to ſet as light by Chriſt and ſalvation as hitherto you have done? and to be the ſame men after all this? I hope not. Oh let not your Miniſters that would fain ſave you, be brought in as Witneſſes againſt you, to condemn you. At leaſt, I beſeech you put not this upon me. Why Sirs, if the Lord ſhall ſay to us at Judgement, Did you never tell theſe men what Chriſt did for their ſouls, and what need they had of him, and how neerly it did concern them to look to their ſalvation, that they made light of it? we muſts needs ſay the Truth: Yea Lord, we told them of

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it as plainly as we could; we would have gon on our knees to them, if we had thought it would have prevailed; we did intreat them as earneſtly as we could, to conſider theſe things: They heard of theſe things every day; but alas, we could never get them to their hearts: they gave us the hearing, but they made light of all that we could ſay to them. Oh ſad will it prove on your ſide, if you force us to ſuch an Anſwer as this.

But if the Lord do move the hearts of any of you, and you reſolve to make light of Chriſt no more: Or if any of you ſay, We do not make light of him; let me tell you here in the concluſion, what you muſt do, or elſe you ſhall be Judged as ſlighters of Chriſt and ſalvation.

And firſt I will tell you what will not ſerve the turn.

1. You may have a notional knowledge of Chriſt, and the neceſſity of his blood, and of the excellency of Salvation, and yet periſh as neglecters of him. This is too common among profeſt Chriſtians. You may ſay all that other men do of him; what Gloſpel paſſages had *Balaam*? Jeſus I know, and *Paul* I know, the very Devils could ſay, who believe and tremble, *Jam.* 2.

2. You

2. You may weep at the hiſtory of his Paſſion, when you read how he was uſed by the Jews; and yet make light of him, and periſh for ſo doing.

3. You may come deſirouſly to his word and ordinances. *Herod* heard gladly; ſo do many that yet muſt periſh as neglecters of ſalvation.

4. You may in a fit of fear have ſtrong deſires after a Chriſt, to eaſe you, and to ſave you from Gods wrath: as *Saul* had of *David* to play before him; and yet you may periſh for making light of Chriſt.

5. You may obey him in many things, ſo far as will not ruine you in the world: and eſcape much of the pollutions of the world by his knowledge, and yet neglect him.

6. You may ſuffer and loſe much for him, ſo far as leaveth you an earthly felicity; as *Ananias*, the young man. Some parcels of their pleaſures and profits many will part with in hope of ſalvation, that ſhall periſh everlaſtingly, for valuing it no more.

7. You may be eſteemed by others a man zealous for Chriſt, and loved and admired upon that account, and yet be one that ſhall periſh for making light of him.

8. You may verily think your ſelves, that you

you set more by Christ and salvation then any thing, and yet be mistaken, and be judged as contemners of him: Christ justifieth not all that justifie themselves.

9. You may be zealous Preachers of Christ and salvation, and reprove others for this neglect, and lament the sin of the world in the like Expression as I have done this day; and yet if you or I have no better evidence to prove our hearty esteem of Christ and salvation, we are undone for all this.

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YOU hear Brethren what will *not* serve the turn; Will you now hear what persons you *must* be if you would not be condemned as slighters of Christ? O search whether it be thus with your souls, or no.

1. Your esteem of Christ and salvation, must be greater then your esteem of all the honors, profits, or pleasures of this world, or else you slight him: *No less* will be accounted sincere, nor accepted to your salvation: Think not this hard, when there is no comparison in the matters esteemed. To esteem the greatest glory on earth before Christ and everlasting glory, is a greater folly,

ly, and wrong to Christ, then to esteem a Dog before your Prince, would be folly in you, and a wrong to him. Scripture is plain in this. *Mat.* 10. 37. *He that loveth father or mother, wife, children, house, land, or his own life more then me, is not worthy of me, and cannot be my Disciple*, as *Luk.* 14. 26.

2. You must manifest this esteem of Christ and salvation in your daily endeavours and seeking after him, and in parting with any thing that he shall require of you. God is a Spirit, and will not take an hypocritical profession instead of the heart and spiritual service which he commandeth. He will have the heart or nothing; and the chief room in the heart too. These must be had.

If you say that you do not make light of Christ, or will not hereafter, let me try you in these few particulars, whether indeed you mean as you say, and do not dissemble.

1. Will you for the time to come make Christ and salvation the chiefest matter of your care and study? Thrust them not out of your thoughts, as a needless or unprofitable subject; nor allow it only some running slight thoughts, which will not affect you. But will you make it your business once a day to bethink you soberly when you are alone, What Christ hath done for you; and what

what he will do if you do not make light of it; and what it is to be everlastingly happy or miserable? and what all things in this world are in comparison of your salvation? and how they will shortly leave you? and what mind you will be then of, and how you will esteem them? will you promise me now and then to make it your business to withdraw your selves from the world, and set your selves to such considerations as these? If you will not, are not you slighters of Christ, and salvation, that will not be perswaded soberly to think on them? This is my first Question to put you to the Tryal, whether you will value Christ, or not.

2. Will you for the time to come, set more by the Word of God, which contains the discovery of these excellent things, and is your Charter for salvation, and your guide thereunto? You cannot set by Christ, but you must set by his Word: Therefore the Despisers of it are threatned with destruction, *Prov.* 13. 13. Will you therefore attend to the publike preaching of this Word? will you read it daily? will you resolve to obey it whatever it may cost you? If you will not do this, but make light of the Word of God, you shall be judged as such as make light of Christ and salvation, whatever you may fondly promise to your selves.

3. Wil

3. Will you for the time to come eſteem more of the *Officers* of Chriſt, whom he hath purpoſely appointed to *guide* you to ſalvation? and will you make uſe of them for that end? Alas, it is not to give the Miniſter a good word, and ſpeak well of him, and pay him his Tithes duly, that will ſerve the turn: It is for the neceſſity of *your* ſouls that God hath ſet them in his Church; that they may be as Phyſitians under Chriſt, or his Apothecaries to apply his remedies to your ſpiritual diſeaſes, not only in publike, but alſo in private: That you may have ſome to go to for the reſolving of your doubts, and for your inſtruction where you are ignorant, and for the help of their exhortations and prayers. Will you uſe hereafter to go to your Miniſters privately, and ſollicite them for advice? and if you have not ſuch of your own as are fit, get advice from others; and ask them *What you ſhall do to be ſaved? how to prepare for death and Judgement?* and will you obey the Word of God in their mouths? If you will not do this much, nor ſo much as enquire of thoſe that ſhould teach you, nor uſe the means which Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed in his Church for your help, your own conſciences ſhall one day witneſs, that you were ſuch

as made light of Christ and salvation. If any of you doubt whether it be your duty thus to ask counsel of your Teachers, as sick men do of their Physitians, let your own necessities resolve you: let Gods expres's word resolve you; see what is said of the Priests of the Lord, even before Christs coming, when much of their work did lie in Ceremonials! *Mal.* 2. 5, 6. *My Covenant was with him of life and peace: and I gave them to him* (to *Levi*) *for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The Law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in Peace and Equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the Priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth: for he is the Messenger of the Lord of hosts.*

Nay, you must not only enquire, and submit to their advice, but also to their just reprehensions, and Church censures: And without proud repining submit to the Discipline of Christ in their hands, if it shall be used in the congregations whereof you are members.

4. Will you for the time to come, make conscience of daily and earnest prayer to God, that you may have a part in Christ and salvation? do not go out of doors till you have

have breathed out these desires to God; do not lie down to rest till you have breathed out these desires; say not, God knoweth my necessity without so often praying; for though he do, yet he will have you to know them and feel them, and exercise your desires and all the graces of his Spirit in these duties: It is he that hath commanded to pray continually, though he know your needs without, 1 *Thes.* 5. 17. Christ himself spent whole nights in prayer, and encourageth us to this course, *Luke* 18. 1. If you will not be perswaded to this much, how can you say that you make not light of Christ and salvation?

5. Will you for the time to come resolvedly cast away your known sins at the command of Christ? If you have been proud or contentious, or malicious and revengeful, be so no more. If you have been adulterers, or swearers, or cursers, be so no more. You cannot hold these, and yet set by Christ and salvation.

What say you? Are you resolved to let them go? If not, when you know tis the will of Christ, and he hath told you such shall not enter into his Kingdom, do not you make light of him?

6. Will you for the time to come serve

God in the *deareſt* as well as in the *cheapeſt* part of his ſervice: not only with your tongues, but with your purſes and your deeds? ſhall the poor find that you ſet more by Chriſt then this world? ſhall it appear in any good uſes that Gods calls you to be liberal in, according to your abilities? Pure Religion and undefiled before God is this, To viſit the fatherleſs and the widows in their affliction, *Jam.* 1. *ult.* Will you reſolve to ſtick to Chriſt, and make ſure this work of ſalvation, though it coſt you all that you have in the world? If you think theſe terms too dear, you make light of Chriſt, and will be judged accordingly.

7. Will you for the time to come make much of all things that tend to your ſalvation; and take every help that God offereth you, and gladly make uſe of all his Ordinances? Attend upon his ſtrengthening Sacraments, ſpend the Lords own day in theſe holy imployments. Inſtruct your children and ſervants in theſe things, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. get into good company that ſet their faces heaven-ward, and will teach you the way, and help you thither: and take heed of the company of wicked ſcorners, or fooliſh, voluptuous, fleſhly men, or any that would hinder you in this work. Will you do theſe things?

things ? Or will you ſhew that you are ſlightes of Chriſt by neglecting them ?

8. Will you do all this with delight, not as your toyl, but as your pleaſure ? and take it for your higheſt honour that you may be Chriſts Diſciples and may be *admitted* to ſerve and worſhip him ; and rejoyce with holy confidence in the ſufficiency of that ſacrifice by which you may have pardon of all your failings, and right to the inheritance of the Saints in light ? If you will do theſe things ſincerely, you will ſhew that you ſet by Chriſt and ſalvation ; elſe not.

Dearly Beloved in the Lord, I have now done that work which I came upon ; what effect it hath, or will have upon your hearts, I know not, nor is it any further in my power to accompliſh that which my ſoul deſireth for you. Were it the Lords will that I might have my wiſh herein, the words that you have this day heard ſhould ſo ſtick by you, that the ſecure ſhould be awakened by them, and none of you ſhould periſh by the ſlighting of your ſalvation. I cannot now follow you to your ſeveral habitations, to apply this Word to your particular neceſſities : but oh that I could make every mans *conſcience* a Preacher to himſelf, that *it* might do it, which is ever with you : that the next

time you go prayerleſs to bed, or about your buſineſs, conſcience might cry out, *Doſt thou ſet no more by Chriſt and thy ſalvation?* that the next time you are tempted to think hardly of an holy and diligent life, (I will not ſay to deride it as *more ado then needs*) Conſcience might cry out to thee, *Doſt thou ſet ſo light by Chriſt and thy ſalvation?* that the next time you are ready to ruſh upon known ſin, and to pleaſe your fleſhly deſires againſt the command of God, Conſcience might cry out, *Is Chriſt and ſalvation no more worth, then to caſt them away, or venture them for thy luſts?* that when you are following the world with your moſt eager deſires, forgetting the world to come and the change that is a little before you, Conſcience might cry out to you, *Is Chriſt and ſalvation no more worth then ſo?* That when you are next ſpending the Lords day in idleneſs or vain ſports, Conſcience might tell you what you are doing. In a word, that in all your neglects of duty, your ſticking at the ſuppoſed labour or coſt of a godly life; yea in all your cold and lazy prayers and performances, Conſcience might tell you how unſuitable ſuch endeavours are to the reward; and that Chriſt and ſalvation ſhould not be ſo ſlighted. I will ſay no more but this at this time, It is

a thouſand pitties that when God hath provided a Saviour for the world, and when Chriſt hath ſuffered ſo much for their ſins, and made ſo full a ſatisfaction to Juſtice, and purchaſed ſo glorious a Kingdom for his Saints, and all this is offered ſo freely to ſinners, to loſt unworthy ſinners, even for nothing, that yet ſo many millions ſhould everlaſtingly periſh becauſe they *make light of their Saviour and ſalvation, and prefer the vain world and their luſts before them.* I have delivered my Meſſage; the Lord open your hearts to receive it; I have perſwaded you with the *word* of truth and ſoberneſs; the Lord perſwade you more effectually, or elſe all this is loſt.

FINIS.